



Safe Kids Week 2007: *Make It A Safe Kids Summer* **Key Messages and Supporting Points**

Accidental injuries to children increase in the summer months, causing deaths and serious disabilities. Almost all of them could have been prevented.

- Nationally in the summer of 2004 alone, 2,143 children (ages 14 and under) died from accidental injury – an average of 17 children per day
- During this same year, 50,125 Utah children made emergency room visits and 769 were hospitalized. Traumatic brain injury was diagnosed in 98 children hospitalized from May through August. Many of the hospitalized injuries resulted in paralysis and other serious and lifelong disabilities.

Safe Kids Worldwide has done a new study ranking states according to their children's accidental injury deaths in the summer.

- Utah ranked 39th among all states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 4.73 childhood accidental injury summer deaths per 100,000 children. This rate is above the national average of 3.67 per 100,000 children. However, a 10.3 percent reduction over a five-year period shows Utah is improving.
- Wyoming received the worst ranking with a death rate of 8.27 per 100,000 children and an 82.5 percent increase in that rate over a five-year period.
- Vermont led the nation with one of the lowest children's accidental injury summer death rates at 1.63 per 100,000 children) and a 60.3 percent reduction over five years.
- The 5 best ranking states were all found in the northeast – Vermont (#1), New Jersey (#2), the District of Columbia (#3), New York (#4) and Delaware (#5).
- The 5 worst ranking states were Wyoming (#51), Alaska (#50), South Dakota (#49), West Virginia (#48) and Nebraska (#47).

Safe Kids coalitions can work very hard and be very effective and still have their state receive a poor rank on the Safe Kids Report.

- State death rates do not correlate with how hard Safe Kids' coalitions work or how effective they are.
- In fact, a state could have improved its safety record and passed improvements in safety laws and still receive a low ranking.
- A state's death rate is affected by many factors, including:
 - The amount of time children spend engaging in outdoor activities such as biking and swimming
 - The fact that a child can die from an injury in Colorado but be recorded in Utah's death rate because she lives in Utah.
 - One large accident causing lots of deaths which threw off the death rate

Nationally five of the most common causes of children's accidental injury death in summer are:

- Drowning (increases 89 percent in the summer over the monthly average)
- Biking (increases 45 percent)
- Falls (increases 21 percent)
- Motor vehicle passenger injuries (increases 20 percent)
- Pedestrian injuries (increases 16 percent).

In fact, almost 60 percent of total child accidental injury deaths from May to August from 2001 to 2004 came from these risk areas.

Safe Kids Utah recommends the following steps to help reduce death and serious accidental injury to children:

- Enact cost-effective child safety legislation, including four-sided fencing around home pools, and booster seat requirements;
- Enact primary enforcement legislation for Utah's existing Safety Belt Laws
- Educate adults and children about the right precautions to take. For example, a properly-fitted helmet has proven to reduce the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent and for every \$1 spent on bike helmets \$52 can be saved in health care related costs caused by injuries when not wearing a helmet.
- Supervise children at all times while at play in and around water, on a playground, and in and around motor vehicles.
- Never leave unattended children in cars

Summer will be here soon – do what you can to keep kids safe!

- *Make It A Safe Kids Summer!* is the theme for this year's National Safe Kids Week, April 28-May 6. Thanks to Johnson & Johnson, Safe Kids Worldwide's founding sponsor, and local donations. Local Safe Kids Coalitions and local public health departments are conducting safety fairs and community events across the state to teach parents about summer safety.
- For a copy of the study, visit. <http://www.health.utah.gov/vipp/> or more information on how parents and policy-makers can make the summer safer for children, visit <http://www.utahsafekids.org/>.